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Military Reliability of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact Allies

National Intelligence Estimate

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MILITARY RELIABILITY OF THE SOVIET UNION'S WARSAW PACT ALLIES

Information available as of 28 June 1983
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PREFACE

The crisis in Poland has again focused Intelligence Community attention on the issue of Warsaw Pact reliability. Two main developments prompt this inquiry. Over the past three decades, Soviet statements and exercise play have evinced increasing reliance on their Warsaw Pact Allies in a war with NATO. Opposition to Soviet dominance has repeatedly found indirect popular and, in some cases, political expression in Eastern Europe. In several instances East European unrest was suppressed only by armed Soviet intervention. An important factor for NATO planning is an assessment of the Soviets' confidence that their Allies would comply with orders and the identification of possible exploitable vulnerabilities in Pact cohesion.

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This Estimate examines the military reliability of the USSR's Warsaw Pact Allies in the event of major external crisis or war with NATO. It considers the roles of the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) armed forces in Soviet plans for war and assesses the various elements that could undermine or strengthen reliability of the NSWP forces.

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Examination of Soviet open literature,

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has revealed little information about the Soviets' views of the reliability of their Allies in a crisis. For the most part the perceptions of Soviet leaders described in the study are our judgments of their probable views.

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Other judgments pertain to our own estimates of probable NSWP force behavior under various circumstances. Available evidence reveals certain steps the Soviets have taken that would be used to control their Allies in time of war and may permit assessment of the probable effectiveness of these steps. This Estimate focuses on a period of crisis leading up to and including the outbreak of hostilities.

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While political, economic, social, and situational factors all play important parts in determining the overall reliability of NSWP armed forces, this study focuses primarily on the military aspects of the question. ☐

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We believe the conclusions of this Estimate are valid for the next several years. Our confidence in this view reflects our assessment that NSWP military reliability is a product of factors that tend to be resistant to change. However, potentially destabilizing factors include changes within the leadership and the deepening economic problems of many East European countries and their sociological consequences. ☐

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Military Reliability

This Estimate uses the concept of "reliability" in two contexts. One is our assessment of whether the NSWP armed forces would carry out Pact directives in the period before or during a conflict with NATO. The other is the Soviet perception of that reliability. We have tried to make clear in which context the word is being used. ☐

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Historically, reliability has been a key variable in the performance of a wide range of armies—both Communist and non-Communist. It is the product of such factors as morale, discipline, training, equipment, and performance on the battlefield. When one or more of these factors prove inadequate to the test, varying degrees of noncompliance with orders, or "unreliability," could result. An extreme example would be those countries that have halted cooperation with their allies or actually changed sides in a war. Unreliability has taken many forms: passive resistance (that is, failure to obey orders or giving only a semblance of obedience); individual or mass defection to the enemy; and active resistance to former allies and countrymen (including sabotage and guerrilla warfare). ☐

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DISCUSSION

Evolution of the Warsaw Pact

1. The relationship of the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) countries with the USSR is forced, and their relationships among themselves at times are competitive and exploitative rather than cooperative. These countries have historical territorial claims against one or more of their East European neighbors as well as histories of discriminating against ethnic minorities.

Origins

2. Immediately after the formation of the Communist governments of Eastern Europe in the mid- and late-1940s, the USSR signed bilateral defense treaties with each of them. No multilateral treaty linked them until after the West German armed forces joined NATO. In 1955, Albania,² Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the USSR signed the Warsaw Treaty.

the Pact primarily served political purposes, both as an international bargaining chip against NATO and a means of institutionalizing Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe through its central policymaking body, the Political Consultative Committee. The Staff of the Combined Armed Forces, invariably headed by a Soviet Marshal, was established in Moscow, but in practice the NSWP forces remained under national control. Over the past three decades Moscow has attempted to make the national NSWP armed forces more responsive to orders from the Soviet General Staff through the Staff of the Combined Armed Forces.

3. In all the NSWP countries except Bulgaria there have been acts of resistance to Soviet dictates, although at varying times and in radically different ways. Only Romania has successfully opposed Moscow's foreign policy line in some, but far from all, respects. How-

² Albania ceased participating in Pact activities after 1961 and renounced its membership in 1969.

ever, although opposition to the Soviets is widespread, it is not universal.

The ruling elites, have vested interests in maintaining the status quo. Most military leaders and many of the party elite have been trained in and screened by the USSR and owe their positions to continued Soviet approval.

4. Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and, to a lesser extent, East Germany tend to be more submissive to Soviet direction in economic, political, and social spheres than the other Warsaw Pact nations, although for very different reasons. Czechoslovakia's submissiveness derives from the repressive measures implemented following the 1968 crisis and the subsequent dependency of the Czechoslovak Government on the Soviets. Bulgarian national interests have usually coincided with those of Russia for many centuries. On the whole Bulgaria has profited from the association, and many Bulgarians (particularly the elite) still tend to recognize Moscow as a protector of their interests.

No ethnic or cultural ties bind East Germany to Moscow. On the contrary, East German leaders depend on the Soviets because of East Germany's rivalry with West Germany and the appeal of the West to many East Germans.

5. Poland, Hungary, and Romania are less submissive to Moscow and have demonstrated this in different ways. Poland's size, history, and internal political dynamics have prevented Moscow from completely imposing its will. Hungary has been able to trade submissiveness in following Moscow's lead in foreign policy matters for greater domestic economic and social freedom. There are recent indications, however, that Budapest is emphasizing its status as a small European state that can serve as a bridge between East and West. Despite a round of Soviet-Romanian media polemics in the spring of 1983, Bucharest has muted some of its differences with Moscow and suggested a willingness to move closer on certain issues. In the past, Moscow has tolerated a measure of Romanian foreign

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policy independence, in part because of Bucharest's domestic orthodoxy. These recent polemics, differences with the Soviets over the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and Romania's continued limited participation in Pact exercises indicate the differences that remain.

6. Ostensibly created as a counterweight to NATO, the Warsaw Pact also has served to legitimize Soviet interference in the affairs of its Allies and its military presence on their soil. The fact that Soviet armed might or the threat of it has been required to quell internal disorders undoubtedly contributes to their concern when assessing the overall reliability of their Allies. The reactions of NSWP military forces to internal Pact crises provide some evidence—albeit indirect—of their military reliability or unreliability. These crises have given the Soviets the opportunity both to evaluate the loyalty of the forces to the regimes—and therefore indirectly to Moscow—and to try to correct perceived deficiencies in Moscow's ability to control its Allies.

The Hungarian Crisis

7. The Hungarian revolution in 1956 was the first internal crisis to test intra-Pact military reliability. The Hungarian People's Army (HPA) was not a significant factor in the crisis. Many soldiers turned their weapons over to civilians, and a few units actively resisted the Soviets. Most units stayed in their garrisons. At the same time, a newly constituted "Hungarian Officer Corps" assisted the Soviets in reestablishing control. Realizing that the restoration of order in Hungary would be a long-term process and that more control was desirable, in the early 1960s the Soviets took measures to improve military reliability, which included:

- The promotion to key positions of Hungarian officers who had proved their pro-Soviet sympathies in 1956.
- A greater role for the Hungarian Communist Party in shaping and controlling the new HPA.
- Designation of specified Soviet officers throughout the Warsaw Pact as representatives of the Commander in Chief of Warsaw Pact Forces.

- Concessions to national pride throughout the Pact, such as the reinstatement of distinctive uniforms and military traditions.

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8. In the 1960s, the Soviets took a number of other steps to improve NSWP combat capabilities and enhance their control measures. In 1961 the Warsaw Pact established direct communications between the Soviet and NSWP General Staffs and held the first multinational exercises involving Soviet and NSWP troops. At the same time a major modernization of both the Soviet and NSWP military establishments also began. Better and more standardized equipment—some built in Eastern Europe—came into the NSWP inventory to improve combat capability and logistic support. It may have had the additional effect of instilling a sense of cohesiveness within the Pact. Such measures signaled a new Soviet emphasis on the employment of NSWP forces in the event of war with NATO, relying most heavily on East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

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The Czechoslovak Crisis

10. The Czechoslovak crisis in 1968 tested NSWP responsiveness, and the outcome gave the Soviets reason for guarded optimism regarding NSWP military reliability for intra-Pact purposes. On the one hand, there was the experience of Czechoslovak popular resistance to Pact intervention together with the fact that part of Czechoslovakia's officer corps participated in the reform movement in the late 1960s. On

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Figure 2
Crises in the Warsaw Pact



East Berliners throw rocks at Soviet tanks in workers' revolt in 1953.



Soviet tank attempts to clear road barricade in Budapest, 1956.



Czechoslovaks carry their national flag past burning Soviet tank in Prague, 1968.

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the other hand, the national governments (except for Romania) ordered their troops (albeit in minor roles) to accompany the Soviet intervention force. The Czechoslovak People's Army (CPA) followed its leaders' orders not to resist. Afterward, the Soviets instituted severe limitations on Czechoslovak command and control:

- Soviet officers were assigned control and supervisory positions in all departments of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Defense and in parts of the political apparatus.
- Both Czechoslovak Military District headquarters were placed under the control of Soviet officers.
- Soviet officers sat in on all important meetings of the Czechoslovak Defense Council and other top military bodies.

The Polish Crisis

12. The next major test of Soviet control over Eastern Europe began in Poland in 1980.

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These measures were taken despite some Soviet confidence that the Polish General Staff also was genuinely concerned about Solidarity and was cooperating in making effective plans for the imposition of martial law.

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13. The Soviets probably draw mixed lessons from the experience of the past several years in Poland. On one hand, large elements of the Polish nation made clear their rejection of the policies of the regime. The survival of that regime rests to a large extent on Moscow's power and the implicit threat of a Soviet invasion. The Soviets had grave concerns about resistance from the Polish Army if such an invasion had occurred. On the other hand, the Polish military performed as expected by its commanders and when and as required by its government.

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As a direct result of the 1968 crisis, five Soviet divisions were stationed in Czechoslovakia, where none had been before. Although this action might not contribute substantially to the reliability of Czechoslovak forces in a NATO war, it does ensure a strong element of direct control over that country's stability.

The Wartime Statute

11. Since the late 1950s, the Warsaw Pact, under Soviet aegis, has evolved into an increasingly integrated military alliance.

Implications

14. These experiences bear only *indirectly* on the response of the Pact as a whole to a real or supposed

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Figure 3
The Polish Crisis



Polish tank patrols Solidarity monument, in Gdansk, December 1981.



Polish armored vehicles seize Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, December 1981.

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external threat, but, on balance, it would appear the Soviets learned significant lessons from all three crises. In the case of Hungary, the Soviets moved in quickly with a small contingent of troops that proved inadequate. They subsequently had to resort to massive force. In the Czechoslovak and, in particular, the Polish crises the Soviets took more time for political maneuvering, and in the Polish case they clearly viewed Pact armed intervention as a last resort. The three crises evolved from different circumstances, although the implicit threat to the Pact was evident in each case. []

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15. The history of repeated popular rebellion, including the participation of elements of the NSWP military establishments in several of these events, probably raises doubts in the Soviet leadership about Pact behavior in a war with NATO. The Soviets have instituted a progressively more elaborate set of [] command and control procedures. Such measures have the additional benefit of minimizing the potential for East European military unreliability. []

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Transition to War

18. A Soviet decision to move toward war with NATO would be made by the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, probably on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Defense Council (the party General Secretary). Soviet Minister of Defense Ustinov is a member of the Politburo, but other Soviet military leaders, including at least the Chief of the General Staff and the Commander in Chief of the Warsaw Pact [] probably would also participate in the deliberations that would precede the Politburo's decision. The readiness and reliability of the Warsaw Pact Allies would almost certainly be among the matters the Soviet Politburo would discuss at this time. []

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The Warsaw Pact as an Alliance

Peacetime

16. In peacetime, the central policymaking body of the Warsaw Pact is the Political Consultative Committee (PCC). Delegates to PCC meetings have included party First Secretaries, heads of governments, Foreign Ministers, Ministers of Defense, and General Staff Chiefs. []

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17. The Committee of Defense Ministers is the highest military organ of the Alliance and is responsible for proposals and recommendations on Pact military matters. The Warsaw Pact Commander in Chief and the Chief of Staff are members of this committee, as well as the Defense Ministers of the member countries. The Military Council, permanently chaired by the Pact Commander in Chief, includes East European deputy commanders and the Pact Chief of

19. The point in the decisionmaking process at which the Soviets would begin discussions with their Pact Allies would depend largely on the circumstances of war initiation. In both propaganda and, to a lesser extent, exercises, the Soviets assume a NATO attack.

20. [] the Soviets express doubts about the possibility of a "bolt

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Figure 4
The Warsaw Pact Alliance



Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party and Chief of State of the USSR, at the May 1980 meeting of the PCC.

Military representatives to the May 1980 Warsaw meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact. Among those shown are Warsaw Pact Commander in Chief Kulikov (second left), Chief of the Soviet General Staff Ogarkov (right), and Polish General of Arms Urbanowicz (center).

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from the blue" attack by either side. They claim that the most likely circumstance for war initiation is the escalation of some regional crisis. During this period, Moscow might hope to achieve its political objectives without a war and, we believe, would strive as long as possible to hold NATO responsible for the threat of war. In any event, we know that the standard Pact scenario is generally a military worst-case situation,

intended by commanders to test their organizations under the worst possible situation. It may not, therefore, fully reflect actual Soviet or Pact perceptions of war initiation.

21.

NSWP officers do not believe that NATO has the intention or capability to initiate an attack at this time. We believe the Soviet leadership

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Whatever the circumstances, the Soviets' dependence on East European support would be a critical factor. Therefore, although the Soviets might withhold from their Allies certain aspects of their own deliberations and perceptions of the crisis, actions and decisions affecting the general operational preparation of the Pact could not be withheld without seriously upsetting what we assume to be standing war plans. The Soviets, however, would also seek to ensure the tactical surprise and integrity of their attack by maintaining tight security over certain operational aspects of their plans.

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Significance of NSWP Forces for Pact Planning

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26. The Soviets continue to urge their Allies to modernize their military forces. Most NSWP countries have been reluctant to accede to these Soviet demands, primarily for economic reasons, and have lagged behind the Soviets in modernization. This slower paced upgrading of NSWP forces could hamper their ability to operate with Soviet forces. This difference further indicates a divergence of priorities between most NSWP leaderships and the Soviets. ☐

27. Of nearly equal importance to successful conduct of military operations against NATO are the lines of communications (LOCs) and much of the Pact logistic support structure within NSWP countries. Even though the Soviets would no doubt commit some of their own forces, such as the Railroad Troops or Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) troops, to protect these LOCs, without NSWP cooperation they would find continued logistic support increasingly difficult. ☐

Soviet Control Measures in the Warsaw Pact

28. The behavior of Moscow's Warsaw Pact Allies will be influenced by a variety of factors ranging from the vested interests of the political and military elites of the East European countries to the attitudes and loyalties of the noncommissioned officers and middle grade officers, to the motivation and control of the armed forces, and to the attitudes and behavior of other groups in these nations. Both NSWP leaders and the Soviets are highly sensitive to these factors and have taken measures that affect their control. ☐

29. Concern about NATO actions is another consideration underlying Soviet control measures. ☐

☐ One reflection of Moscow's attitude is the jamming of Western radio broadcasts to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Opposition by the Soviets to the use of Western language on jamming in the final document of the Madrid meetings on CSCE highlights their continued concern for the harmful effects of such broadcasts. The Soviets clearly perceived Western broadcasts during the Polish crisis as playing on a potentially significant Pact vulnerability. ☐

Political Leadership

30. In spite of the increasing tendency on the part of some East European governments to assert a degree of independence, their foreign policies still are not provocative vis-a-vis Moscow (with the partial exception of Romania). Their elites generally benefit from heeding Moscow's wishes. The Warsaw Pact's collective defense arrangements give the East Europeans a considerable measure of security. For nations whose history has been replete with wars, Soviet dominance offers a peaceful, albeit oppressed, respite. Perhaps more important, the Pact, under Soviet leadership, is a guarantor of the continuance of Communist regimes within each of the Pact countries. Thus, on balance, Soviet hegemony helps protect the ruling elites of Eastern Europe against both foreign and domestic enemies. ☐

NSWP Military Leadership

31. The Party leaderships regularly co-opt leading members of the military high command into their ranks, thereby acquiring their military expertise and giving them access to the policymaking process. ☐

The Political Control Apparatus in the Military

32. Under normal noncrisis conditions, NSWP political control organs generally achieve a high degree of conformity and obedience within their armed forces. Pact media do sometimes reveal flagrant examples of poor training, corruption, lack of discipline, and improper ideological orientation—but always in the spirit of exposing the offenders and correcting the problems. The regularity of such discussions ☐

☐ leads us to believe that Pact military commanders are well aware of the potential for unreliability. The control system is structured so that

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their troops will at least get assembled to go into combat if ordered. ☐

33. The Warsaw Pact political control apparatus consists of the main political administrations (MPA) of the armed forces. The chiefs of these MPAs hold military rank and are part of the military command structure; however, their organizations are also directly subordinate to the Communist Party and report through party channels. These separate reporting channels provide the party an alternate source of information for assessing the status of the armed forces. The MPA structure, in most cases, parallels the military chain of command, with deputy commanders for political affairs assigned down to the company level. Although these "political officers" are responsible primarily for troop indoctrination, they share responsibility with the military commander for any decline in the overall combat readiness of the unit. In fact, by their influence over discipline, control over indoctrination, authority in assignment matters (they can recommend replacement of any personnel including the commanding officer), and their direct and separate chain of command, they have in most cases a disproportionately powerful position in the military structure. Although organizationally subordinate to the commander, they are rated by the next higher political officer, not by the commander. Therefore, while the political officer and the unit commander have a common interest that supports the control system within Pact military units, the political officer in most forces enjoys a high degree of autonomy from the regular chain of command. Nevertheless, in combat, as well as peacetime, the dual military and political control system has elements of ineradicable tension, which sometimes disrupt an otherwise cooperative relationship. ☐

☐ in Poland, however, the political officers have been reported as taking hardline positions during the course of the crisis. ☐

34. **Troop Education.** Military-patriotic education at the troop level consumes several hours each week of the troop training schedule. Political education often bores the average conscript, and the Pact military

press regularly cites examples of ineffective political officers. Even so, military-patriotic education complements and builds on the previous political training that all citizens of Pact states receive in school and at work. ☐

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35. Political reliability is critical to advancement in the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact. The enterprising conscript seeks membership in the Young Communist organization if he wants to advance in rank, and a party membership card is a virtual necessity for the officer who wants to get ahead. ☐

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Situational Factors in NSWP Military Reliability

42. In the event of crisis or war, a number of major situational factors would probably have some influence on the military reliability of NSWP countries. All of these factors are variable within the context of the presumed situation. The following discussion of their individual and collective contributions to Pact reliability is therefore speculative and scenario dependent.

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National Considerations

43. The degree to which the Soviets could count on NSWP support in a specific situation varies among these countries. A major influence would be the view of the potential gains or losses resulting from cooperating in Soviet military actions as perceived by leader-

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Figure 5 Warsaw Pact Exercises



Marshal of the Soviet Union Kulikov, Commander in Chief of Warsaw Pact forces, at joint maneuvers in East Germany in 1980.



Czechoslovak, East German, and Soviet Army officers in joint exercise.



Bulgarian and East German soldiers at joint command post exercise "Brotherhood-in-Arms."



Soviet and Hungarian troops launch bridge in river-crossing exercise.

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ship groups in each country. The possible consequences of losing would be a prime factor for consideration by NSWP leaderships. Another important consideration would be the amount of damage likely to be inflicted by NATO forces during the conflict. Given their geographic location, however, damage expectations would probably be high no matter what their choice. ☐

44. In a conflict with NATO, Soviet and NSWP leaders would claim to be defending themselves against aggression. Thus, the Polish and Czechoslovak people would be urged to defend themselves against West Germans and might find that argument convincing. The Hungarians might share such a view, but to a lesser extent. Also, the Bulgarians could take satisfaction in the possible opportunity to recover lost territory from the Greeks and Turks. East German susceptibility to such propaganda is open to question because some sources have doubted the vigor with which East Germans could be expected to fight West Germans. There are also national considerations that could act to reduce the desire of NSWP forces to engage in combat with NATO countries. Historical affinities might make Poles, Czechoslovaks, or Hungarians unwilling to fight Americans, the British, or the French, particularly if Western appeals in this regard were effectively transmitted. ☐

45. The Soviets have reason to feel differently about the potential reliability of each of their NSWP Allies. They probably recognize the Bulgarian regime as their most reliable Ally. Bulgarian leaders have consistently supported Soviet policy and historically have had the closest ties with the Soviet Union. ☐ reporting places the East German regime as the next most reliable in Soviet eyes—both politically and militarily. Soviet confidence is certainly reinforced by the presence of 19 Soviet divisions in the country. Considering its history, Czechoslovakia must be a source of concern for the Soviets. Nevertheless, the regime was politically reliable under Antonin Novotny and remains so under Gustav Husak. The Czechoslovak populace appears to be resigned to continued Soviet domination, reflected by the presence of five Soviet divisions. Despite the presence of four Soviet divisions in Hungary, its reliability is more open to question. Hungary's geographic and strategic position might allow its leaders to

minimize direct engagement with NATO forces. Romania is probably perceived by the Soviets as militarily the least reliable ally. In addition to Soviet concern about Romanian foreign policy, Bucharest has failed to participate fully in Pact exercises, other than with small staff elements, and has rejected any formal integration of its forces into the Pact command and control systems. ☐

46. Regardless of two Soviet divisions in the country, Poland has been a perennial problem for the USSR, and its political eruptions, sparked by economic problems over the years, have had a strong undercurrent of anti-Soviet sentiments. Poland's key role in military operations and its location on the main lines of communication to the West must, therefore, result in a great deal of concern by the Soviets. Perhaps assuaging some of this concern, however, is the fact that the Polish armed forces as a whole—though not directly assigned to a confrontational role—have performed their duties in a reliable manner during the Solidarity crisis. In part, the Polish military can be said to have acted to restore domestic order to prevent an overt Soviet intervention. The extent to which the Polish situation can be used to measure NSWP, or even Polish, reliability is open to question. Because of widespread social unrest, disorganization of the Polish Communist Party, and severe economic problems, there was an erosion of Soviet confidence in the near-term reliability of the Polish armed forces. While the extent of current Soviet confidence is in question, and the memory of recent strains will linger, precedent indicates that confidence would be restored over time. Community opinion diverges on precisely when this would occur. Most agencies believe that Soviet confidence in Poland's ability to carry out its Warsaw Pact obligations is slowly improving and that the Polish armed forces would carry out initial Pact wartime orders. An alternative view holds that Soviet confidence in the Polish armed forces will not be restored until the party regains preeminence and Solidarity is no longer a major factor in Polish society.⁴ ☐

Personal Motivation

47. Given the political dependence of these regimes on the Soviets, many leaders are likely to assess their

⁴ The holder of this view is the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army. ☐

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interests as congruent with the Soviets' in most respects. Their convictions as lifelong Communists and their personal status, indeed survival, are likely to lead most of them to comply with Soviet directives. However, some might attempt to influence or interpret these directives according to their perception of their national interests. Also influencing East European perceptions is the constant threat posed by proximity to the USSR. ☐

48. The Soviet concept of fast-moving offensive operations could constitute a strong lever for ensuring the personal participation of individual East Europeans in a war with NATO. It would be to the Soviets' advantage to minimize time for reflection or exposure to anti-Soviet nationalistic sentiments amplified by Western psychological warfare. It would, however, be difficult to eliminate such exposure completely. ☐

49. Unit cohesion and the respect of troops and junior officers for their battlefield commanders are important factors that the Soviet forces, like all other armies, have recognized. Pact training and doctrine emphasize unquestioning obedience to orders and severe punishment for noncompliance. Rapid, victorious movement to the west would confirm all that NSWP troops have been taught to expect, and thus bolster their reliability. Stalemate or retreat could raise fears about the superiority of Western weaponry, erode unit cohesion and cooperation, and exacerbate tensions within the Pact's high command. ☐

Circumstances of War Initiation

50. East European leaders know that their countries stand to suffer greatly during a war through the destruction of much of their populations and economic infrastructures. These concerns and possible differing views on how to resolve the crisis could drive some leaders to offer alternative solutions or attempt to moderate Soviet positions through party, government, and personal channels. Their likely goal in these efforts would be to influence Moscow to reconsider its options short of war. ☐

51. It seems unlikely that a central European war would begin with a "bolt from the blue" attack, without some degree of political warning and prewar mobilization on both sides. Soviet military strategists state explicitly that such a contingency is improbable,

although they emphasize the continuing possibility of a NATO surprise attack as the basis for high Pact readiness. Nonetheless, the Soviets evidently believe that a general war would most likely result from the expansion of a local crisis, preceded by rising tensions that could last several weeks or longer. Such a condition, which the Soviets call the "threatening period," would allow the Soviets time to appraise and influence popular attitudes, as well as those of NSWP leaders, before implementing any decision to initiate hostilities. ☐

52. A short period of crisis before hostilities begin would provide little time for political factors undermining NSWP reliability to show any effect. It would require the Soviets to implement Pact war plans and commit forces on short notice. In such a situation the Soviets would also have little time to mobilize their reserve forces deep within the Soviet Union, and they would thus have to rely primarily on forces (including NSWP forces) already stationed in Eastern Europe for the prosecution of initial phases of the war. If the Soviets judged that a regional crisis had a high potential for escalating to major war, they would attempt to initiate at least partial Pact mobilization ☐

53. Should the crisis be prolonged, anti-Soviet views and their impact on military personnel—especially the conscripts—could gain importance. Extensive propaganda campaigns by both the Soviets and the NSWP countries would seek to suppress any anti-Soviet, antiwar sentiments by depicting NATO as an aggressor whose bellicose intentions would be construed as an outrage to the national interests of all Pact members. The many historical, cultural, and political differences among the NSWP countries could potentially weaken

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military reliability, and their influence could grow throughout the prewar crisis. The Soviets are aware of these attitudes and would look to the ruling elites of Eastern Europe for support. ☐

54. If the Soviets decided to initiate hostilities, they would probably conduct a multifaceted program of propaganda and "active measures" both to bolster the East Europeans' confidence and to distract the West. (The invasion of Afghanistan incorporated active measures, including a "request" for assistance, to legitimize the Soviet invasion.) Should the Soviet-inspired measures prove ineffective and the NSWP populations perceive that there was inadequate justification for war, opposition to conflict could be widespread. Such opposition, however, would have to develop early to have a major influence on mobilization. Depending on the circumstances, some NSWP leaders, groups, and individuals might work to limit their countries' involvement in the war and to play as passive a role as possible. Other, and probably smaller, groups might engage in active resistance to Soviet forces. However, we would expect that the large number of Soviet troops moving through Eastern Europe toward the front would have an inhibiting effect on local populations. In any event, to the extent that Moscow exercises control over NSWP forces through the Warsaw Pact in this scenario, NSWP leaders could find that large elements of their own armed forces were already alerted under combined Pact command. Attempts to subvert the system devised by the Soviets probably would not be effective. ☐

55. Continued NSWP civil unrest has probably led Soviet military planners to consider eventualities that include massive defections within the Pact. Prudent military planning would require setting up contingency plans to deal with such worst-case situations. ☐

56. The circumstances of war initiation would affect NSWP reliability insofar as the relative length of the preceding period of crisis allows for countervailing forces to gather momentum. A short prehostilities crisis would tend to afford the Soviets the best chance for applying the controls ☐

☐ Even in a "longer threat" scenario, the Soviets could still withhold some infor-

mation from their Allies in the interest of secrecy and security. ☐

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Fortunes of War

64. As in all wars, the degree of success on the battlefield is likely to be the most critical factor to the reliability of the armed forces engaged. Defeat or even stalemate could impair the reliability of many of the East European military forces.

there are historical precedents for allies changing sides when the tides of war turn, including in Eastern Europe in World War II. The penalties the Soviets could exact in an age of nuclear warfare, however, would be very high. Prolonged combat, particularly with a static front, would raise the question among all segments of

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the NSWP forces and populace about the wisdom of participation in a drawn-out war of attrition, increasingly damaging to their countries. Such a sentiment might not be Pact wide, nor would it necessarily apply to all the forces of one particular country. However, it would have a direct effect on the combat effectiveness of some Pact units and could, over time, spread to other Pact forces. ☐

65. Escalation of the war to include NATO nuclear strikes against NSWP targets might have drastic effects on NSWP military reliability, but this would depend on the combat situation. If NATO were to direct its nuclear fire so as to spare East European populations and combat units not cooperating with the Soviets—or were to announce such an intent—then the incentives of NSWP countries to be neutral could increase. However, if NSWP leaders saw themselves as being on the winning side, the use of nuclear weapons—especially against their homelands—could simply increase their determination to take revenge against NATO. In any event, there is no historical precedent or evidence for any projections of military or civilian reactions to nuclear warfare in Europe. ☐

66. In the event that the general Pact offensive collapsed and East European forces had to make major withdrawals, we believe Soviet control measures could be hard pressed to ensure NSWP reliability. Such an

eventuality would undermine any NSWP perception of the Soviets as invincible, probably disrupt Soviet command links, and present opportunities for non-compliance with orders and defection. Alternatively, NSWP armed forces would fight more enthusiastically if they perceived the battle as a struggle to defend their homelands. Soviets plans for a rapid and overwhelming offensive no doubt are based, at least in part, on the fear that a stagnant front or retreat could have crucial debilitating effects on NSWP troops and perhaps their own as well. NSWP soldiers will respond to the same stimuli that have affected soldiers throughout history. Given sufficient cohesion to initiate combat operations, continued reliability will be tied largely to the relative success of the forces involved. ☐

67. In conclusion, we believe that the Soviets' need for support by the NSWP forces is such that they would not initiate a war against NATO until they were reasonably sure of the participation of most Pact forces. The primary factors affecting the Pact's military reliability during initial hostilities are its established control mechanisms and the status of its training and discipline. We believe these are likely to favor the reliability of the Pact in the early stages of the conflict. Reliability thereafter could be progressively degraded by Pact failure on the battlefield and appropriate NATO initiatives. ☐

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